

Trial and Effect

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Summary: Post Ares on Trial. What happened after the credits rolled.

Trial and Effect

Trial and Effect Part One

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notes: i know, all i seem to write anymore is YH. i can't help it, these guys sucked me in and i can't get free! then again, i'm not exactly complaining ;-) anyway, i'm working on a possibly long (it's growing as we speak) grown-up herc story. however, i saw 'ares on trial' for the first time on friday. i really liked this ep, but i would like to have had, i don't know, some more 'oomph' in the reaction department. *evil grin* hi, i'm kaly and i like to beat up on iolaus! where's my club membership? i'm shutting up now. ~~kaly

disclaimer: if for whatever reason renpic cannot complete it's job looking after YH, YI and YJ they are subsequently given to kaly... hee... well, you can't fault me for trying. okay, renpic and studios usa own em, even though i asked santa for them for christmas...

Trial and Effect: A Post "Ares on Trial" Fic Part One

After Hercules' surprise return from Olympus, the three cadets walked from the courtyard toward the Academy door. "Chieron should be in the drill room," Jason said to Hercules as they walked.

Nodding, Hercules replied, "Good. Might as well let him know that I'm not really dead." Pausing just outside the door, Hercules grinned as he added, "Although I like the idea of no drills for a few more days."

"Don't even think about it, Hercules," Jason laughed, tapping him on the shoulder and walking into the building. "We have to work out, so do you."

Walking up beside Jason, Hercules glanced back at Iolaus and commented, "That's funny, you two didn't seem to be working very hard when I walked up."

Iolaus, who was walking just behind Hercules and Jason, didn't comment. His silence earned him surprised glances from the two other cadets. "What's wrong, Iolaus? Gryphon got your tongue?" Jason asked lightly.

Iolaus shook his head, shaking himself out of his thoughts. Forcing a smile, he replied, "You wish, Jase. You're always complaining that I talk too much." Iolaus laughed when he half-slapped the back of Jason's head. "Make up your mind!"

"Well, you don't talk anymore than you look in the mirror," Hercules kidded.

Jason laughed, "Ouch, that hurt."

Looking at Jason, Iolaus smirked, "This coming from the crown-prince of vanity?"

"Hey, he said it!" Jason protested with a grin, pointing at Hercules.

Feigning innocence, Hercules glanced at Jason, "I said what?"

"Yeah," Iolaus laughed, "Herc, you play innocent about as well as Jason manages to play humble."

"This coming from one who doesn't manage either," Jason kidded with a smile.

They were just outside the practice room when Iolaus said, "I can't help it if I'm irresistible to women." Tugging on his vest, he continued, "Which makes it hard to be either."

Laughing, Hercules looked at Iolaus in disbelief, "Just how hard did Strife zap you anyway?"

Jason and Iolaus looked at Hercules, confused, "Strife?" Jason asked.

"You mean Ares," Iolaus finished.

Before Hercules could explain, Chieron called out, "Hercules!" All of the cadets practicing stopped, turning to look at the three cadets that had just walked through the door. Cheiron wasn't halfway across the room before hushed whispers began flying in the crowded room. Clapping Hercules' hand, Chieron said, "Welcome back. Good to see you in one piece."

Hercules nodded, "Thanks, Chieron. Sorry to worry you."

Chieron glanced back at Iolaus, knowing how badly he had taken

Hercules' believed death. "You're safe, that's what matters. Now, you three, get to work."

"Drills? It's almost dinner time," Iolaus complained.

Jason laughed, "Wouldn't be Iolaus if he wasn't worried about dinner."

"Or breakfast," Hercules offered.

"You forgot lunch," Jason added.

Rolling his eyes, Iolaus pushed past his two friends. "Ha ha. I believe I was about to whip you on the balance beams."

"You can try anyway," Hercules joked.

As the three cadets walked across the room toward the beams, Chieron managed to hide his smile. He was glad to see them joking once again. During Hercules' absence he had been worried how long it might be until Iolaus really did give up. Now, it appeared, everything was back to as normal, as it could manage at the academy.

An hour later exercise time was over, and the cadets poured into the dining hall. "So, Herc," Iolaus said around bites of food, "you never said. What did Strife have to do with anything?"

Hercules took a drink of water before replying, "He was the one who attacked me, with Discord's help. It only looked like Ares."

"How'd they manage that?" Jason asked.

Iolaus swallowed a bite of bread before asking, "And how did you find out?"

Jason continued, before Hercules could speak. "And where were you that whole time?"

Hercules laughed, his eyes wide. "One at a time, already. I'll tell you all about it, but can I finish dinner? I'm starving!"

"Sure, think of just yourself," Jason replied with a laugh. "Don't give poor little us any details. We'll just sit here and not interrupt your digestion."

"Exactly," Hercules said, managing to keep a straight face. Glancing over at Iolaus with a grin, Hercules took another bite and kept quiet.

Iolaus rolled his eyes, "We're not going to beg for details, Herc."

"Sure you will," Hercules laughed.

"No, we won't," Iolaus insisted from behind his glass.

Pushing his plate away, Jason added, "Now tell us."

"I thought you weren't going to beg?" Hercules asked with a smug grin.

"Think of it more as an order," Iolaus observed dryly.

Hercules' eye brow arched as he asked "An order?"

"Sure," Jason said, sitting up straighter. "Works for me."

"I don't know. Maybe I shouldn't tell," Hercules baited.

Standing, Iolaus was about to comment when someone rang the bell that signaled the end of dinner. "Saved by the bell, Herc," he said, grabbing his plate.

"How about a game of ball?" Jason asked once he had put his dishes on the wash pile.

Hercules thought about it for a minute before saying, "Not tonight. I'm beat."

"Then let's go to the barracks and you can tell us about what really happened," Jason offered.

Hercules had just nodded when Iolaus walked over to where he and Jason were standing. "So what are we doing?" Iolaus asked.

"Hercules is going to spill it about Ares, or Strife, or whatever," Jason replied.

"Oh," Iolaus nodded. After a moment's pause, Iolaus asked, "Then what are we waiting for?"

Hercules laughed, looking at Jason, he commented, "Iolaus? Impatient?"

"Never!" Jason said, laughter ruining his serious expression.

"Let's go, I want to hear this before lights out," Iolaus said.

"He has a point," Jason agreed, turning to walk toward the large dormitory room.

Iolaus hurried to catch up to Jason, leaving Hercules standing alone in the hallway. Laughing, Hercules muttered under his breath, "These two will drive me nuts yet." A moment later he called out, "Hey, wait up!" and ran to reach them just before they walked into the dorm room.

Dropping down onto his bed, Iolaus said, "Now, spill it blondie."

"Isn't that what people usually call you, Iolaus?" Jason asked from where he was sitting on his own bed.

"Nah," the shorter cadet replied, "I'm Curly."

"I say you're both ," Jason commented dryly.

Laughing, Hercules pulled his shirt off over his head, but kept his

undershirt on. "I think you're not one to talk, Jase."

"I'll have you know," Jason responded, "that I'm perfectly normal."

"Then Corinth is in a whole lot of trouble," Iolaus observed.

Jason had opened his mouth to reply when Hercules interrupted, "Guys?"

"What?" Two sets of eyes turned to face the demigod.

Instead of replying, Hercules broke into a laughing fit. "Uh, Jase, what's wrong with him?" Iolaus asked with a sideways glance at Hercules.

"Now, you mean?"

Iolaus nodded, "Well, I've given up on figuring him out completely."

Crossing his arms, Jason rubbed his chin absently, "Yeah, I see your point."

"You two are too much, you know that?" Hercules asked finally.

"Us?" Jason asked with a disbelieving laugh.

"Why's that?" Iolaus asked, his curiosity piqued.

Hercules shook his head, "You bug me all afternoon to tell you about the tribunal and when I try to you won't shut up talking."

"What do you mean we won't shut . . ." Iolaus began, before saying, "Wait, the tribunal? What tribunal?"

"Thought that might get your attention," Hercules said with a grin. "It all started when Ares attacked, or at least I thought it was Ares."

Over the next couple of hours, Hercules told Jason and Iolaus about the trial and eventually finding out that it had been Strife and Discord who had attacked him, not Ares. By the end, Hercules was yawning in between words, and fighting to stay awake.

"Why don't we end story time for tonight, okay?" Hercules asked, "I'm barely staying awake here."

Struck by the sudden urge not to go to sleep, Iolaus protested. "Come on, Herc. I want to hear more about your sisters."

"You and women, I swear Iolaus," Jason said, rolling his eyes. "But, he's right," Jason added. "It's getting late."

Punching his pillow, Iolaus mumbled, "Yeah, well. Whatever," and rolled over with his back to his two friends confused glances.

A few seconds later, Hercules asked, "What was that all about?"

Jason shrugged, "I don't know." He did, however, have an idea. Although he wasn't quite ready to mention it to Hercules. If he was wrong he would only end up angering Iolaus.

"Night, Jason," Hercules said, breaking Jason from his thoughts. Yawning again, the demigod turned over and was quickly asleep.

"Goodnight, Hercules," Jason replied, but wasn't sure if he was even still awake.

It took Jason a while longer to fall asleep than it had Hercules, and Iolaus fought sleep even longer. Every time the blond cadet closed his eyes he saw Jason searching the ruined debris of the boat, while he stood on the shore helpless to do anything. When sleep eventually overcame him, he surrendered to Morpheus' depths quite unwillingly.

The barracks were dark and quiet a few hours later, when Jason sat up on his bunk. He was trying to decide what it was that had woken him. Jason was just about to turn back over when he noticed Iolaus tossing and turning restlessly. Jason half-smiled, usually he was the restless sleeper, not Iolaus. After a few more moments, Jason was about to go back to sleep when he heard Iolaus muttering in his sleep.

"No. Herc. No fair . . ." The rest of what he was saying was cut off as Iolaus again tossed onto his side.

End Part One

Trial and Effect Part Two

Realization struck Jason and concern shown on his features. Picking up his pillow, he tossed it at Hercules. A second later, Hercules jerked awake as the flying object hit him in the face. Startled, Hercules sat up in his bunk and looked frantically around the room to see what was wrong.

Seeing nothing out of the ordinary except Jason sitting up, Hercules squinted to see his face in the darkness. "Jason?" he whispered. Holding up the pillow, he asked, "Any reason for smacking me with a pillow?"

Motioning with a jerk of his head toward the door, Jason whispered, "We need to talk."

Confused by Jason's strange behavior, Hercules climbed out of bed and followed Jason out of the sleeping quarters. Once they were just outside the door, Jason pushed the door until it was almost closed.

"What's up Jason?" Hercules asked, still trying to shake the sleep from his mind. "Why'd you wake me up?"

Glancing through the crack in the door, Jason sighed. "I think you need to talk to Iolaus."

"I talked to Iolaus right before I went to sleep, Jase."

Jason shook his head. "That's not what I mean. You two need to really talk."

Leaning against the wall, Hercules crossed his arms. "What about, Jason?"

"Just look at him, Hercules," Jason said, pointing toward the sleeping figure.

Following Jason's outstretched hand, Hercules looked across the sleeping cadets until he spotted Iolaus asleep on his bunk. He could see Iolaus tossing and see his mouth moving, but couldn't make out the whispered words.

"He took your dying, or disappearing as it were, a lot worse than he's letting on, Hercules," Jason said when Hercules remained silent.

Hercules looked over at Jason, "He was fine earlier."

"He'll kill me for telling you, but when you were gone he was pretty upset." Again looking at where Iolaus was twisting himself up inside his covers, Jason added, "I just think the two of you should talk, where you don't have to worry about prying eyes."

Hercules didn't have a chance to reply before they were interrupted by Iolaus' sleep-talking. "Herc! No! My fault . . . All my fault."

Wide-eyed, Hercules turned his attention from Iolaus to Jason. "I had no idea."

"I have the feeling that you never would have if he hadn't woken me up earlier." Jason paused, silently hoping that Iolaus forgave him for interfering. "I know he's tough, Hercules, but he's pretty shook up. We all were upset when we thought you were gone, but Iolaus . . . He took it worst of all."

Nodding, Hercules placed a hand on Jason's shoulder. "Thanks for opening my eyes."

"In more way than one, huh?" Jason asked, a faint smile on his face that just reached his eyes.

"Yeah, something like that," Hercules grinned, his grin fading when he turned to walk back into the barracks.

Jason waited in the hallway while Hercules walked over to Iolaus and shook his arm gently. "Hey, Iolaus. Wake up, buddy."

"Huh?" Iolaus said, jerking awake suddenly. "Herc?" he asked, blinking his eyes. "What's wrong?"

Placing a finger over his mouth, Hercules whispered, "I need to talk to you."

"Ah, Herc. I was trying to sleep. We can talk in the morning," Iolaus muttered, closing his eyes.

"Not in the morning, Iolaus. Now," Hercules insisted, pointing toward the hall.

Confused, Iolaus untangled himself from the sheet and followed Hercules to the hallway. When they closed the door behind them, Iolaus glanced over at Jason, asking, "What did you do?"

Doing his best to look surprised, Jason laughed as he replied, "Me? Who said I did anything?"

"That nervous giggle gives you away every time, Jase," Iolaus said. "Besides, why else would you be up?"

Stifling a yawn, Jason commented, "I was just trying to wake up someone stubborn."

When Jason didn't elaborate, but instead turned and began to walk back into the barracks, Iolaus asked, "What's that supposed to mean?" Jason didn't respond, and closed the door behind him, leaving the two friends alone in the empty hallway.

For a few minutes neither cadet spoke, it was Iolaus who finally broke the silence. "Okay, you woke me up. What did we have to talk about right now?"

"We need to talk about what happened," Hercules finally said.

Dropping to sit on the floor, Iolaus replied, "I don't know what you're talking about, Herc."

Sitting next to Iolaus, Hercules said, "I think you do."

"And how do you know what I think? Your trip to Olympus give you the ability to read my mind all of a sudden?" Iolaus asked. He knew he was being cold toward Hercules, but he couldn't help it.

Shaking his head, Hercules responded, "No, I just know you pretty well, and so does Jason. Besides, you were talking in your sleep."

"I did what?" Iolaus asked, his gaze meeting Hercules'. At his friend's nod, Iolaus shook his head, stifling humorless laughter. "What was I saying?"

Glad he was taking the conversation seriously, but still surprised, Hercules replied, "That it was all your fault."

"I cause a lot of trouble, Herc," Iolaus said, with a smile that didn't reach his eyes. "Could you be a little more specific?"

Hercules was forced to admit that he had expected Iolaus' often stale humor to make an appearance sooner or later, he couldn't help it. Choosing the direct route, Hercules blinked slowly and continued, "It wasn't your fault that I disappeared, Iolaus."

"I stood by and did nothing, Herc," Iolaus said forcefully.

"There was nothing you could have done," Hercules said simply.

Standing, Iolaus began to pace restlessly. "Jason at least tried to look for you. What did I do? I stood on the shore and looked on like some helpless little kid. I almost got you killed."

"No," Hercules replied, placing a hand on Iolaus' shoulder. "Strife did that. And he's being punished for it."

Turning unusually serious blue eyes to meet Hercules', Iolaus tried to explain. "Herc, you were my first friend. And I almost proved my father right."

Caught off guard by Iolaus' frank answer and his mentioning his father, Hercules asked, "What do you mean you almost proved your father right?"

Iolaus figured why not, go ahead and tell Hercules about what his father had once said. "That I'm worthless, Herc. Anyone who wants to be friends with me is just asking for trouble." Lowering his gaze, Iolaus added, "That I would just let them down in the end."

"You can't believe him, Iolaus."

Iolaus looked up at Hercules, "Why not? He's my father."

"So, he's your father. So what?" Hercules protested.

Iolaus laughed, "You're one to talk, Herc." The blond paused before explaining, "You've never met your father, yet look at what you'll go through just to get his attention."

"Yeah, well," Hercules said, unsure what to say to Iolaus' comment. "I do know that your father was wrong. You've always stood by me, through some stupid stuff, I know."

Iolaus laughed, "Got that part right."

"And," he stressed, "you didn't let me down, Iolaus." Hercules paused before saying, "I know we didn't always get along very well back home." He glanced at Iolaus when he heard his broken laughter and smiled, "But you were my first friend, too."

"Why do I find that hard to believe?" Iolaus asked.

Hercules grinned, "Because you're amazingly paranoid?"

"Who told you?" Iolaus dead-panned.

Turning serious, Hercules added, "There's no one I want at my back in a fight more than you."

"Back to back?" Iolaus asked. When Hercules nodded, he finished by saying "It's me, you and Jason against the world."

Holding out his hand, Hercules grinned, "Heros."

Taking his offered hand in a warrior's grasp, Iolaus replied, "Heros."

After a moment of silence, the stillness was broken by Chieron's voice saying, "Boys."

Both of the cadets jumped at his voice. "Chieron," Hercules acknowledged.

"I'm glad you've worked out what was bothering you," the headmaster said, "but I believe it's still lights out time."

Iolaus and Hercules nodded, and after turning to walk back into the dorm room, Iolaus leaned over and whispered to Hercules, "How does he do that?"

Hercules shrugged, "Maybe he'll teach us?"

"Bed, gentlemen," Chieron added.

Laughing, a few seconds later Hercules and Iolaus crawled back into their bunks. "'Night, Herc."

"'Night. Thanks, Iolaus," Hercules said.

Propping up on one elbow, Iolaus whispered, "Thanks? For what?"

"I don't know," he grinned.

"Being stubborn, probably," Jason observed, startling his two friends. "Now go to sleep."

"Yes, Mom," Hercules and Iolaus said at the same time, laughing.

The End

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